UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.198/1992/2
14 February 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION
Fourteenth session
30 March-16 April 1992

SUBSTANTIVE QUESTIONS

Activities of the Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC)

Report of the Secretary-General

1. In resolution 46/73 B of 11 December 1991, the General Assembly requested "the Secretary-General to submit reports of the Joint United Nations Information Committee to the consecutive sessions of the Committee on Information". The present report, covering the activities of JUNIC during 1991, has been prepared in response to this request.

2. JUNIC held its seventeenth session in New York from 24 to 26 June 1991 under the chairmanship of Mr. Richard Lydiker, Director of Information of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Information Directors and officials of 27 United Nations bodies, including specialized agencies and related organizations, attended. The meeting discussed a number of information issues of mutual concern, with a view to improving inter-agency cooperation and coordination in the field of public information. Its report was presented to the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) in document ACC/1991/11. Reproduced here are highlights from that report, as well as some of the follow-up action on decisions taken at the thirteenth session of JUNIC:

(a) Extensive discussions were held regarding arrangements for upcoming special events requiring inter-agency cooperation, and in particular the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). JUNIC made a number of decisions on issues related to the Conference, including a Source Book for Media, journalists' tours, assistance to radio journalists, acquisition of new photographic materials, acquisition and adaptation of existing documentary programmes on environment, United Nations system exhibit, and others.

(b) During consideration of reports from the Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS), JUNIC focused on the persistent problem of financing of the Service as the broad-based support for its activities had not been accompanied by a level of contributions sufficient to enable NGLS to maintain its core programme and budget. Following the JUNIC session, this issue was discussed at several meetings of NGLS sponsors, but the results have not been conclusive so far. A progress report is expected at the next JUNIC session.

(c) At its seventeenth session, JUNIC also decided that the task of serving as the NGLS' lead agency should rotate among the Service's contributing agencies for a two-year term and the United Nations Children's Fund subsequently assumed this responsibility, with the understanding that the Department of Public Information would continue to provide support services.

(d) JUNIC also discussed the persistent financial problems of Development Forum, the only system-wide publication on development and social issues. It was noted that financial support for this valuable publication was dwindling and unless a solution was found soon, Development Forum might have to cease publication. JUNIC took note of proposals to improve the content and format of Development Forum, as well as proposals to increase contributions from JUNIC members, advertisements and other fund-raising activities. A progress report is expected at the next JUNIC session.

(e) With regard to the participation of the United Nations system in international exhibits, JUNIC reviewed progress on the arrangements for the 1992 Genoa and Seville exhibits, and recommended, in principle, joint United Nations participation in the 1993 Taejon International Exposition in the Republic of Korea. ACC, at its session held in October 1991, approved the JUNIC recommendation for joint United Nations system participation in the Taejon Exposition, subject to compliance with guidelines for joint participation by the United Nations system in international expositions. The United Nations Department of Public Information will act as lead agency.

(f) Regarding inter-agency cooperation in audiovisual productions, JUNIC discussed matters pertaining to several issues of interest to participating organizations, including the Agenda for a Small Planet - IV television series, the Azimuths monthly TV magazine, as well as joint participation by the members of JUNIC in international film festivals and video markets.

(g) JUNIC also discussed the ways and means of strengthening the use of computer technology in the field of information within the common system and decided to organize a workshop on the applications of computer technology in the field of public information. The workshop, organized by FAO, was held at the headquarters of the International Meteorological Organization in London from 11 to 13 February 1992. It provided a welcome opportunity for the information managers to discuss technological innovations in the computer field which has great potential for possible applications within the United Nations system.

3. The eighteenth session of JUNIC is scheduled to take place from 7 to 9 July 1992 at FAO headquarters in Rome. JUNIC is expected to follow up on a number of activities initiated last year. According to the preliminary agenda, it is to review a variety of issues relating to inter-agency cooperation in the field of information and to make decisions on, inter alia, the 1992/93 work programme and future financing arrangements for NGLS as well as the future of Development Forum. JUNIC will also review arrangements for the promotion of special events of interest to the members, such as the International Conference on Nutrition (1992), World Conference on Human Rights (1993) and the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations (1995).

4. At the eighteenth session, JUNIC is also expected to make a decision regarding its chairmanship for the next biennium (1993-1994).